

Chester

Diocesan News

April 2018

News, features, jobs...
chester.anglican.org

Growing stronger parishes

Cathedral choir wants to sing in your church



As part of its 150th anniversary celebrations, the Nave Choir is planning a year-long tour of the diocese. The choir would be very pleased to hear from churches within the diocese which would like it to visit to sing a service (perhaps choral evensong, Compline or Vespers) on a Sunday in 2018 or 2019.

If you are interested in hosting the choir

in your church, please contact Andrew Wyatt, Assistant Director of Music at andrew.wyatt@chestercathedral.com

Founded in 1867, Chester Cathedral Nave Choir is the oldest continuously serving cathedral voluntary choir in England. It sings regularly in Chester Cathedral and has toured nationally as well as overseas.

Thy Kingdom Come

Thy Kingdom Come is a global prayer movement which the Archbishop of Canterbury is inviting people around the world to join. He is calling on Christians to pray that people might know Jesus Christ during a focused time between Ascension and Pentecost from 10th - 20th May 2018. You are invited to join the global

wave of prayer and pledge to pray at www.goo.gl/qt1v0j

We want to invite young generations to be part of Thy Kingdom Come. So, as part of the Diocese of Chester's involvement there will be a weekend residential, specifically designed for young people in school years 7-11. For more information see www.goo.gl/GoPv7

Thirty Years of Partnership - *By the Archdeacon of Chester*

2018 marks the thirtieth anniversary of the beginning of the link between the Diocese of Chester and the Province of Melanesia. The Anglican Church of Melanesia stretches across hundreds of islands, nine dioceses and three different countries (the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and New Caledonia) in the south-west Pacific. Although Chester and Melanesia are on opposite sides of the world, and the journey between them is about thirty hours by plane, the link is well-established and very fruitful.

Missionaries from England brought the gospel to Melanesia in the nineteenth century, and the church there remembers that with deep gratitude. But the relationship today is most definitely one of partnership in which we pray, work and learn with sisters and brothers many thousands of miles apart.

If you have experienced Melanesian worship, perhaps during one of the visits by members of the four religious orders of the Melanesian Church to our diocese, you will know how inspiring and uplifting it is – full of joy and sincerity and tremendous unaccompanied harmony resounding to the glory of God. But along with joy the Melanesian Church has undergone great suffering. As recently as 2003, seven of the Melanesian Brothers, the largest of the religious orders, were martyred while trying to mediate in an ethnic conflict. We have much to learn about the joys and challenges of the Christian life from our brothers and sisters in the Pacific.

The link has included many different elements. Groups have visited regularly in both directions. The diocese raised the funds to help build Chester House in Honiara, the capital of the Solomon Islands, which is run by the Melanesian Brothers to provide income for their life and work. Several Melanesian Brothers have studied for theology degrees at the

University of Chester, including the newly-consecrated Bishop of Temotu, Leonard Dawea. There is increasing number of partnership arrangements between schools in this diocese and in Melanesia. Our thinking about and reaction to the global problem of climate change has been informed by the serious practical effects which changing weather patterns and rising sea levels have had in that part of the world. We have been blessed by the ministry of Bishop Willie Pwaisiho, who came over from the Solomon Islands and has served as a parish priest and honorary assistant bishop in the diocese since 1997.

We look forward to the link developing in new ways in the future. Meanwhile, do please pray for our brothers and sisters in Melanesia, as they pray for us.

The Ven Dr Michael Gilbertson





Members of the Sisters of the Church play the pipes at the headquarters near Honiara.

Ministry Training

Foundations for Ministry

Discover your gifts and calling while learning with others. This course is open to anyone who wants to grow and develop in Christian ministry and forms the first year of training for Reader and Pastoral Worker ministries. The next course begins in September. For further information or an application form please contact Jane Hood on 01928 718834 ext 257 or email ministry@chester.anglican.org

Chester Diocesan News

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Louise Annison describes St Peter's Night Church

"On a typical Saturday evening, Chester is usually packed with partygoers strolling between bars from 7pm until late. Some will notice an archway bearing a neon sign which reads: 'Night Church'. Glancing through the doorway, it is easy to assume this building is another bar. The door team and fairy lights in the dimly lit interior don't seem out of place. But, stepping inside, visitors are stunned to realise that 'this is a Jesus church!' There is no service. Instead candles and lighting draw attention to the altar and prayer stations.

Most visitors comment on the beauty of the building and the sense of peace. A small group sit quietly listening to musicians worshipping God. Others chat to Night Church volunteers over a cup of tea or coffee in the café area. The space feels strangely safe. It's easy to talk about deeper things here, things that are usually hidden beneath the surface. To ask questions, to grieve, or simply to be. Visitors often describe Night Church as

the best part of their night.

Over one hundred people visit Night Church on a typical evening. They describe Night Church as special, different or peaceful. They are intrigued to find that the team are all volunteers. Why would anyone work until 2am without pay?

Volunteers are enthusiastic about Night Church, they say that it's easy to pray and to worship here. They tell stories of visitors who have touched their lives. They speak of times that God's love has reached people who have rejected religion and would never dream of going to church, about seeds of hope planted."

Is there space for Night Church in your town or city? Starting a night church is simple with the right location, a handful of volunteers and a few hundred pounds. To find out more see nightchurchchester.org or contact nightchurchchester@gmail.com Louise Annison leads St Peter's fortnightly Night Church.





Spirituality and prayer

One of my jobs is to help people, both lay and ordained, to find a Spiritual Director or Companion - a person who walks beside them on their journey of faith.

I did not have a church background, but when I went in search of God at the age of 16 I found in my local church a clergy person who helped me with my many questions about life and faith. He was patient and listened without judgement and without pushing his own agenda and he gave me the space to find myself and the God who loves us so completely and utterly. He became my Spiritual Companion for many years.

Much spiritual companionship happens quietly and locally within parishes with prayer partners and others and this should continue to be encouraged and nurtured. However, it can be a help to find someone who is outside your parish and your own surroundings.

Those going into ministry in the diocese are asked to find a Spiritual Companion and I have a list of over 50 Spiritual Directors, men and women, ordained and lay, who are available. The list includes a short profile and contact details. They are scattered all over the diocese so that there will be somebody in your area should you want one locally.

As you know from my own story and journey into faith I was not going into any kind of ministry and so I would encourage anyone to think and pray about finding a spiritual companion. Whatever job you are in, whether retired or in the sixth form at school, whatever age, whatever situation you find yourself in, those on the List of Spiritual Companions are there if you need them. They offer a safe space to share and explore your faith. Please get in touch anytime and I will send you the list.

Revd Graham Green, *Officer for Prayer and Spirituality*.

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World War I Centenary Ringing

An appeal has gone out to church bell ringers around Britain to join in a major event this year to commemorate the centenary of the end of World War I.

The organisers of Battle's Over, a national and international event marking the armistice, want to see more than 1,000 churches and cathedrals participate by ringing their bells simultaneously at 7.05pm on the night of November 11th 2018.

Pageant master Bruno Peek is encouraging bell ringers to take part in Ringing Out for Peace. He said: "We want this to be the most widespread ringing of church bells since the First World War.

It would be a fitting and moving tribute to the 1,400 or so bell ringers that we understand lost their lives during that war. I have no doubt that dedicated campanologists in Britain and around the world will want to join in this once-in-a-lifetime tribute to everyone who served on the battlefields, the high seas and the home front."

"I hope as many people as possible will join us in the Battle's Over events to mark the conclusion of the First World War and pay tribute to the loved ones who played their part."

Churches can register their involvement by completing the Ringing out for Peace entry form found at **brunopeek.co.uk**

New Approaches to Bible Reading

Speaker: Sue Richardson, Theological Education Adviser with Christian Aid. Sue is Roman Catholic with a particular experience of the church in Brazil and a commitment to the theology of liberation. This will be a day to explore certain kinds of approach to Bible reading – spending time as practitioners, using three different approaches and examining our responses to them. 26 April 2018, 10am – 15:30 at Foxhill House and Woodland, Tarvin Road, Frodsham WA6 6XB. Lunch and refreshments included. There is no charge for this event, however booking is essential. To book, contact Jane Hood on 01928 718834 ext 257 jane.hood@chester.anglican.org



Styal delivery

Following a Chester Deanery clergy visit to HMP Styal, Canon Paul Dawson suggested that the Deanery might like to support the work of the chaplaincy by collecting underwear and small size travel toiletries. Some parishes took this on enthusiastically and the photo shows just some of the boxes being delivered by Paul Dawson from St Mary's Handbridge and Anne Stockdale (not shown as she took the photo) from St Michael's Plas Newton.

Rev Yvonne Yates, (on the right) chaplain to HMP and YOI Styal, has written a lovely thank you letter for our generous gifts, explaining that many of the women there have few who care for them personally. Staff in the reception area were delighted to receive all the underwear to give out as the women arrive. Often the women have

only the clothes they stand up in. Yvonne writes, "It is so important to our women that they recognise that people in the faith communities outside are thinking about them and caring."

"Some of the women performed the Nativity (Styal version where Jesus was born in Styal Prison in 2017) in our Carol Service. They had shown great commitment in writing and performing the drama and it was extremely powerful for those of us who watched."



Will you be a 'Roof Breaker' for disability?

Vanessa Layfield is our newly appointed Engagement and Inclusion Officer. As a qualified Social Worker, Vanessa has over over 30 years' experience in Health and Social Care and a certificate in leadership and management. She is a member of St Mary's Church Nantwich, where she sings in the Church Choir.

Her new role involves her helping parishes to understand exclusion and the barriers people with disability face. Vanessa has been working with our newly formed Diocesan Disability Forum exploring how to transform church life by ensuring disabled people feel included, empowered and enabled to contribute to God's Kingdom.

Vanessa said; "I look forward to working with church communities across the Diocese. As a starting point I am encouraging every church to appoint a 'Roof Breaker'. The idea of a Roof Breaker is inspired by the story found in St Luke 5:17-31, which tells of a paralyzed man being healed by Jesus after being lowered through a roof. If anyone is interested in becoming a 'Roof breaker', please go to: www.throughtheroof.org/supportingyou/roofbreakers/

Once sign up has been completed, a free starter kit will be sent to you. I am also encouraging parishes to sign up to our Enabling Church course (details below)."

Vanessa works Monday-Thursday and she can be contacted at vanessa.layfield@chester.anglican.org or 01928 718834 ext 232

Enabling Church Course

The course, produced collaboratively by national Christian disability-focused organisations and the Diocesan Disability Forum promotes:

- A theological understanding of disability
- Awareness of resources available
- Development of a local disability-inclusive initiative

The course lasts for 8 sessions from 7pm to 9pm at Church House on May 3rd, 10th, 17th, 24th, June 14th, 21st, 28th and July 5th. To book, please go to the Chester Diocese website under, Social Responsibility, then Disability and book on Eventbrite as soon as possible to avoid disappointment. The course is free of charge.



Community spirit comes alive at a Roof Breaker event